

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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INFO AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

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AMEMBASSY KABUL

AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

CINCPAC

AMCONSUL BOMBAY

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMCONSUL MADRAS

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 17894

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS:PINT, IN

SUBJECT: THE CONSTITUENT ELEMENTS OF THE JANATA PARTY: THE  
JANA SANGH

1. THE FOLLOWING IS A SUMMARY OF AN AIRGRAM (A-2416  
BEING POUCHED TODAY TO ADDRESSEES DEALING WITH THE  
"ERSTWHILE" JANA SANGH:

2. ALTHOUGH IT FORMALLY DISSOLVED ITSELF AND MERGED WITH  
OTHER PARTIES TO CREATE THE JANATA PARTY EARLIER THIS  
YEAR, THE HINDU NATIONALIST  
JANA SANGH CONTINUES TO PROVOKE INTENSE CONTROVERSY  
AND SPECULATION OVER ITS ROLE WITHIN THE RULING PARTY  
AND ITS FUTURE INTENTIONS. CRITICS PREDICT THAT THE POWERFUL  
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JANA SANGH GROUP -- WITH ITS COHERENT IDEOLOGY,  
RIGOROUS DEDICATION AND DISCIPLINED CADRE -- WILL EVENTUALLY  
"CAPTURE" THE JANATA AND USE IT FOR ITS OWN NARROW AND  
COMMUNAL ENDS. YET, PARADOXICALLY FOR A GROUP NOTED FOR  
ITS IDEOLOGICAL TOUGHNESS, THE FORMAL JANA SANGHIS AT THE  
CENTER PLAY A DISTINCTLY LOW-KEY ROLE AND HAVE ADOPTED AN  
APPARENTLY MODERATE STANCE ON MANY POLICY ISSUES.

3. THE MOST STRIKING FEATURE WHICH SETS THE JANA SANGH GROUP APART IS ITS LARGE, DISCIPLINED AND WELL-ORGANIZED CADRE OF WORKERS AT THE GRASS ROOTS -- A LEGACY OF ITS RSS HERITAGE. THE JANA SANGH TRADITIONALLY DREW THE BULK OF ITS MEMBERSHIP AND IDEOLOGICAL INSPIRATION FROM THE RSS (RASHTRIYA SWAYAMSEVAK SANGH), A PARA-MILITARY SOCIAL SERVICE VOLUNTEER CORPS FOUNDED TO DEFEND THE INTERESTS OF INDIA'S HINDUS. ALTHOUGH NO FORMAL TIES EXIST BETWEEN THEM, THE JANA SANGH AND RSS ARE SEEN AS SEPARATE BUT COMPLEMENTARY ASPECTS OF A SINGLE MOVEMENT, THAT OF HINDU NATIONALISM.

4. UNLIKE MOST OTHER FIGURES IN THE JANATA, WHO HAVE BEEN CONGRESSMEN AT ONE TIME OR ANOTHER, THE JANA SANGHIS WERE NEVER PART OF THE CONGRESS AND HENCE HAVE BEEN ISOLATED FROM THE BROAD NEHRUVIAN MAINSTREAM OF INDIAN POLITICS. THEY WERE THE "OUTSIDERS", AND LONG YEARS OF ISOLATION IN THE OPPOSITION PRODUCED A HOMOGENEITY AND UNIFORMITY AMONG THE SANGHIS WHICH EVEN TODAY EVIDENCES ITSELF AS A STRONG SENSE OF SEPARATE IDENTITY. THEY APPEAR TO HAVE ADJUSTED TO THE NEW ROLE OF SHARING POWER WITH COLLEAGUES WITH WHOM THEY HAVE LITTLE IN COMMON, BUT THE SEPARATENESS OF THE SANGH GROUP CONTINUES TO BE A FACTOR IN INTERNAL JANATA POLITICS AND COULD BE A SOURCE OF FRICTION AND MISTRUST IN THE FUTURE.

5. NUMERICALLY, FORMER JANA SANGHIS ARE IN A STRONG POSITION:  
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THEY FORM THE LARGEST SINGLE BLOC AMONG JANATA MP'S IN PARLIAMENT AND ARE THE PREDOMINANT GROUP AMONG JANATA STATE ASSEMBLY MEMBERS IN DELHI, PUNJAB, MADHYA PRADESH, RAJASTHAN AND HIMACHAL PRADESH. DESPITE THEIR STRENGTH IN THE LOK SABHA, THEY HAVE A DIS-PROPORTIONATELY SMALL SHARE OF SENIOR MINISTERIAL PORTFOLIOS IN THE GOI CABINET, PERHAPS THE RESULT OF SCARCE TALENT AND ALSO AN INCLINATION TO DEVOTE THEIR ENERGIES TO PARTY ORGANIZATIONAL WORK.

6. A KEY FEATURE OF THE JANA SANGH'S POLICY WAS ITS DRIVE FOR INDIGENOUS SELF-RELIANCE, WHICH DICTATED INTER ALIA DEFENSE PREPAREDNESS, AN END TO FOREIGN AID, CLOSER CONTROLS OVER FOREIGN-OWNED COMPANIES AND INDIA'S DEVELOPMENT OF A NUCLEAR WEAPONS ARSENAL. FIERCE OPPOSITION TO FORMER AGGRESSORS CHINA AND PAKISTAN, A COOLNESS TOWARD THE SOVIETS AND OCCASIONAL CRITICISM OF THE U.S. FOR SUPPLYING ARMS TO PAKISTAN ALSO CHARACTERIZED SANGH FOREIGN POLICY. THE EX-JANA SANGHIS APPEAR TO HAVE AN INFLUENTIAL VOICE TODAY IN DOMESTIC ECONOMIC AFFAIRS. HOWEVER, ON FOREIGN POLICY, MUCH OF THE STRIDENT CHAUVINISM IN THE TRADITIONAL JANA SANGH APPROACH APPEARS TO HAVE BECOME MUTED AS THE GROUP "CAME IN FROM THE COLD" AND ASSUMED A SHARE IN GOVERNMENT RESPONSIBILITIES.

7. APPREHENSIONS OF THE JANA SANGH GROUP AND THEIR ULTIMATE MOTIVES REMAIN STRONGLY FELT AMONG THE NON-SANGH ELEMENTS. FOR INSTANCE, THEY SEEM INTENT ON THE INDEPENDENCE OF THEIR LABOR AND YOUTH AFFILIATES. THE FORMER JANA SANGHIS SEEM CONTENT WITH THEIR CURRENT SHARE OF POWER AND THEIR INFLUENCE IN GOVERNMENT COUNCILS, BUT THIS SITUATION COULD CHANGE, PARTICULARLY IF LARGE NUMBERS OF DEFECTING CONGRESSMEN WERE TO BE WELCOMED INTO THE JANATA. THE STRUGGLE OVER CHOOSING MORARJI DESAI'S SUCCESSOR COULD ALSO UPSET THE CURRENT EQUATION. A FURTHER IMPONDERABLE FACTOR IS THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE JANA SANGHIS THEMSELVES ARE MODERATING THEIR VIEWS AND GOALS AS SHAREHOLDERS IN THE JANATA EXPERIMENT. THIS QUESTION IS COMPLICATED BY THE BELIEF THAT THE

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JANA SANGH GROUP ITSELF MAY BE DIVIDING BETWEEN MODERATES WHO HAVE A STAKE IN THE CURRENT SET-UP AND THE HARD-LINERS WHO OPPOSE ANY DILUTION OF THE SANGH'S PURITY.

8. WE BELIEVE IT IS STILL TOO EARLY TO REACH DEFINITE CONCLUSIONS ON JANA SANGH INTENTIONS AND GOALS. THE JANATA'S CONSTITUENTS ARE STILL EVOLVING THEIR MUTUAL RELATIONSHIPS, AND IT IS LIKELY THAT THE ACTORS THEMSELVES HAVE REACHED NO CONCLUSIONS -- PREFERRING INSTEAD TO RELY ON AD HOC, DAY-TO-DAY ARRANGEMENTS IN RESPONSE TO THEIR OWN PERCEIVED INTERESTS. FOR THE PRESENT, THE JANA SANGHIS, WHO PROBABLY SEE THE CURRENT POLITICAL ORDER AS BEING ADVANTAGEOUS, ARE LIKELY TO REMAIN QUIET, RESPONSIBLE PARTNERS IN THE JANATA VENTURE, SINCE THEY HAVE TOO MUCH TO LOSE BY ACTING OTHERWISE.

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